

INTRODUCTION

The Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances experienced major changes in its operations that constituted a major leap in its organizational development. The positive results of the Participatory Capacity Building Evaluation that it conducted, through the support of its partners, e.g. HIVOS from The Netherlands and the PSO-Netherlands and their corresponding recommendations contributed to such changes. With the positive results of the Participatory Evaluation leading in the increase of partner-organizations working with AFAD, there has been a corresponding increase in the demands of the work. Corollary to this is the increase in human resources both in the regional secretariat which is based in Manila and in the member-organizations through the hiring of country staff members in selected countries. Nevertheless, the Federation is experiencing major adjustments in the implementation of its work.

The following is a general presentation of the organizational status of AFAD and its work.

✦ Internal Status of the Federation

The AFAD Council decided to postpone the election of its Chairperson during its Third Congress to be held in December 2006. To note, AFAD lost its former Chairperson, Munir who was violently killed by arsenic poisoning in a Garuda flight from Jakarta to Amsterdam via Singapore on September 7, 2006. Despite the fact that Munir was still supposed to finish his two-year remaining term, the AFAD Council decided not to elect a new chairperson until its Third Congress. The reason for the decision is partly because shocked by the murder of its former chairperson; the AFAD Council was not in the position to think of a possible replacement. Realistically, the issue of getting second liners is a difficult one. The AFAD Council realistically believes that it needs time to train new people to lead the Federation, which, despite its eight years of existence, still needs full maturity.



New RC librarian, Candy May (left), joins AFAD Secretariat old-timers, Minda (middle) and Jeni.

From very limited sources of funds during the past years, AFAD made a breakthrough in terms of forging partnerships with organizations willing to give financial resources to realize the implementation of its work. Such organizations include the following: HIVOS (The Netherlands); OAK Foundation (The United Kingdom); PSO (The Netherlands); United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (Switzerland); The Royal Netherlands Embassy (Philippines) and the *Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED)*.

The increase in financial resources necessarily necessitates more people to implement the work. Thus, the composition of the AFAD Secretariat, which is based in Manila, has been increased from two fulltime and one part time to five full time workers. Despite the fact that the number of fulltime workers has been doubled, still the Federation finds that already, the



present number of people working in the Federation is not anymore adequate to respond to the increasing demands of the work.

In a period of adjustment as to the pace of its work, given the comprehensive funding that it has received from various sources, the implementation of some of its tasks has been delayed. Despite the hiring of additional people to do the work, such hiring also did not happen immediately at the beginning of the year, the Federation tried, to the best of its ability, to cope up with the increasing demands, but still, on the first half of the year, specific tasks have been delayed because of many factors, the principal one was the unreadiness of the member-organizations in preparing for the activities supposedly scheduled on the first half. But conscious of the need to keep track with its work, the AFAD Council and its Secretariat are catching up with their unfinished tasks during the second half of 2006.

And indeed, during the last quarter of the year, full implementation was done, especially in the aspect of both lobbying and solidarity work, with focus on rehabilitation sessions for the families of the disappeared. The preparations for the Congress were done only late October, which was already late as compared to a year-long preparation of both the AFAD Council and the AFAD Secretariat during the Second Congress in August 2003.

It is important to note that at the end of the year, the AFAD Congress, held in Kathmandu, Nepal on December 16-18 2006, decided to approve two organizations as part of its list of members, e.g. the Claimants 1081, a Philippine organization of 10,000 victims of human rights violations who won a class suit against the Marcoses before the US Federal Court of Hawaii and the Advocacy Forum, an organization in Nepal which works, among other issues, on the phenomena of enforced disappearances in Nepal.

Two other applications, e.g. from the Working Group on Justice for Peace of Southern Thailand and the War Crimes Fact Finding Committee of Bangladesh were not yet decided upon positively because the AFAD Congress believed that the Federation needs time to know these organizations better. But this will be discussed again in March when AFAD shall have known them better through country further joint efforts and country visits.

On the negative side, the Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance (FIND) decided to resign from

AFAD ended the year with the formulation of a six-year Strategic Plan, which was formulated by the AFAD Council and Secretariat and approved by the AFAD Congress. After the Congress, the year ended with AFAD being informed of the unanimous adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the United Nations Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS SUMMARY ACCORDING TO ITS COMPONENTS OF WORK

✦ International Solidarity

AFAD continued to consolidate itself through internal planning and assessment sessions as well as capacity building activities done at all levels, e.g. AFAD Council, AFAD Secretariat and individual secretariat members.

Consolidation also means strengthening the very constituency of the Federation, e.g. the families of the disappeared. Thus, the direct assistance programs, e.g. Rehabilitation/Therapy sessions for the families of the disappeared and scholarship program for families of the disappeared were part of AFAD's consolidation efforts. These were complemented by the national member-organizations' self-initiated efforts for rehabilitation and education/conscientization. The work on strengthening of the families of the disappeared is principally done by the national member- organizations. AFAD's role is that of support to complement the efforts in the national level.



Secretary-General Mary Aileen (middle) and Administration officer Jeni (second to the left) with the rehabilitation participants in Kashmir.

During the whole year period, AFAD was able to implement the entire national rehabilitation program in all countries including Nepal and Southern Thailand as a follow up to the First Sharing of Experiences of Asian Families of the Disappeared – the second level of rehabilitation program of AFAD. The third level of the rehabilitation program, i.e. From Victims to Healers, had already been implemented in Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

Part of the Federation's solidarity work is forging continuing working relationship with similar formations from other continents, e.g. *FEDEFAM* of Latin America, We-Remember-Belarus of Eastern Europe, the African Network Against Enforced Disappearances (*RADIF*) of Africa through some of its individual organizations active on the work against enforced disappearances. It works continuously with HOM/Linking Solidarity based in Utrecht, The Netherlands which facilitates cooperation among organizations of families of the disappeared world-wide. Concrete manifestation of solidarity during the period were AFAD's joint efforts with these formations in lobbying for the adoption of a Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances. Thus, in AFAD capacity-building activities, specifically in terms of lobbying, AFAD invited representatives from both *FEDEFAM* and We-Remember-Belarus to participate.

✚ International Lobby



First session of the Human Rights Council in June 2006.

AFAD's International Lobby work within the period was centered on the adoption of the United Nations Draft Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances by the United Nations Human Rights Council. It is important to note that in March 2006, the then United Nations Commission on Human Rights was abolished. Immediately after its abolition, the United Nations established its Human Rights Council which is composed of forty-seven UN member-states, 13 of which are Asian governments. In its historic first session attended by the AFAD delegation, the United Nations Human Rights Council unanimously adopted the United Nations Draft Convention on

the Protection of All Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances. Such adoption is a breakthrough to the struggle against impunity. Having done lobbying work at the national and international levels, AFAD has its lion's share of this major achievement in human rights.

In the national level, AFAD member-organizations underwent lobbying efforts with their foreign offices in their respective capitals and with pertinent government agencies and foreign embassies. The AFAD Secretariat, on the other hand, also undertook lobbying efforts with pertinent government agencies and foreign embassies based in Manila.

The adoption in June 2006 of the future international treaty after its unanimous adoption by the United Nations Human Rights Council was followed by the final adoption by Third Committee of the of the United Nations in New York. The General Assembly was convened in September to November 2006. AFAD, in cooperation with similar formations from Latin America, Africa and Europe made a last minute lobbying at the late stage of the Convention.

Finally, on December 20, 2006, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the Convention and opened it for signing, the ceremony of which is scheduled on February 6, 2007 in Paris, France.

For the future international treaty to enter into force, it has to be ratified by at least twenty-member states of the United Nations. If these member-states will ratify, they will be obliged to codify the specific offense of enforced or involuntary disappearance in their penal code. Thus, national laws criminalizing enforced or involuntary disappearances have to be enacted by UN member-states that ratify this international treaty.



AFAD members attend the HRC session in Geneva.

Hence, the future instrument having been adopted by the United Nations, will undergo the next stage, i.e. campaign for ratification and enactment of national legislation. In as far as AFAD is concerned, signing and ratification by Asian countries and their consequent codification of the offense in their penal code should be of prime importance.

✚ Campaign and Public Information

AFAD's Campaign and Public Information work during the period complemented the other aspects of the work. Thus, AFAD conducted campaign and public information drive through a public forum on the Convention Against Disappearances in May 2006. To support these efforts, campaign and public information materials, e.g. primer on the convention, posters, stickers, buttons/pins and bookmarks were produced during the period.

To respond to the burning issues of the day vis-à-vis cases of enforced or involuntary disappearances, AFAD issued statements on various issues which were uploaded in its website (<http://www.afad-online.org>). These were also sent to AFAD's contacts nationally and internationally.

AFAD's video production, entitled, "Healing Wounds, Mending Scars," was translated to Spanish and was shared with the members of the Latin American Federation of Associations of Relatives of Disappeared- Detainees.

AFAD was able to produce its regular publication, The Voice. But due to other equally important activities, it was able to produce only one issue. Instead of two for the year, i.e. November 2006 issue.



Dutch Embassy Former Second Secretary, Mr. Marcel Van den Bogaard, officially opens the AFAD Resource Center.

A major accomplishment of AFAD in the aspect of Public Information and Campaign was the establishment and launching of the AFAD Resource Center which is located in its office in Manila, Philippines. The Resource Center was established in honor of murdered Indonesian human rights defender and AFAD Chairperson, Munir and Kashmiri Human Rights Defender killed in a landmine blast, Aasia Jeelani. The Resource Center aims to collect information on the issue of enforced disappearances in order to be made available to users from all social sectors, thus projecting the phenomena of enforced disappearances.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

✚ Administration and Finance

1. Hiring of AFAD Country Staff

Fulltime country staff members from Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Kashmir were hired within the period. The following are some basic information regarding the country staff hired:

Miss Veronica Kusuma – fulltime country staff of AFAD working for its two member-organizations in Indonesia, e.g. *KontraS* and *IKOHI*. She started working for AFAD in March 2006.

Mr. Muhammad Asif – fulltime country staff of AFAD working for its member organization in Kashmir, India, the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons. He started working in May 2006.

Mr. Sam Samarasinghi – fulltime country staff of AFAD working for AFAD's member-organization in Sri Lanka, the Organization of Parents of Disappeared Persons. He started working in June 2006.

It is important to note that the presence of these persons in the Federation had, to a large measure, contributed to ensuring the implementation of AFAD's plan of action. There is a plan to hire people with the same tasks and corresponding qualifications for other AFAD member-organizations in other countries.

They coordinate closely with the AFAD Council members in their respective countries as well as with the AFAD Secretary-General. Accountable to both the AFAD Council, through its Secretary-General and to the member-organizations concerned, through their respective representatives to the AFAD Council, these country-staff members are required to give their monthly reports.

Together with the AFAD Secretary-General and AFAD Secretariat members, they hold regular electronic conferences through Yahoo Messenger in order to ensure implementation of the work and to coordinate efforts.

2. Transfer to a bigger physical center and acquisition of pieces of office equipment

AFAD moved to a bigger physical center, i.e. from one small room to three rooms, one of which is the AFAD Resource Center and another smaller one is a conference room.

As part of the establishment of a new physical center parallel with the specific establishment of the AFAD Resource Center is the acquisition of office equipment, e.g. library computers (2), cabinets and shelves, computer tables, library printer, air conditioning units for two additional rooms, computers for administration and



Vero reports on Indonesia during the Country Staff Orientation activity.

finance, typewriter, laminator, ring binder, conference table, LCD, cabinet for office supplies, digital voice recorder.

As part of the standard operating procedure to make an inventory of both the already existing pieces of equipment and the newly acquired ones, inventory was done at the middle of the year. This will have to be repeated by the AFAD auditor at the beginning of 2007.

3. Staff Development activities

3.1 Finance Training



Workshop on filing finance requests.

From June 15 to 17, the AFAD Secretariat had a "Training on Simple Financial Management for Non-Accountants" facilitated by AFAD's auditor, Ms. Maria Dulcinea Samar of the Redor, Emerson & Company. The activities' two main objectives were to help the office management communicate more efficiently to the staff its financial plans; activities and condition to interested parties and to better manage its financial resources. In this light, the office hopes to gain a better understanding and appreciation of giving proper financial reports from the most basic liquidation of expenses to the major yearly audited reports. The

training provided workshops to the non-finance officer of the organization on how to request for project budgets, cash advances, petty cash and liquidations. On the last day of the training, only the facilitator and the finance officer met to discuss and focus on the more technical aspects of the work.

3.2 Secretariat Planning/Logframe

Throughout the year (February 10, March 29, June 1 & 7-8, July 4-6), the Secretariat discussed the different components of AFAD's work (lobbying, campaign & public information, resource center, administration, finance, solidarity, and leadership and federation building) with consultant Mr. Delfin Borrero. For each component, the group thought out the specific goals, objectives, outputs and activities of the Federation at the Secretariat and Council level and then put them in a log frame format.

This exercise was done in the hope of reviewing the AFAD mission and vision and aligning activities and outputs based on what it ideally sought out to do; to maximize resources for projects that better understand and address the needs of the families of the disappeared. Moreover, the Secretariat aimed to present this to the Council and serve as guide for the three-year strategic planning activity.

4. Capacity-Building based on PSO funding

4.1 Country Staff Orientation

Three country staff members from Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Kashmir have been hired this year to help manage the work coordination between the Secretariat and the member-country organizations. They were invited this September to

participate in AFAD's series of activities including a one-day orientation (September 1) arranged for them. Only two of the country staff members, Ms. Vero Kusuma (Indonesia) and Mr. Mohammad Assif made it to the activity, however. Mr. Harischandra Samarasinghe from Sri Lanka couldn't come due to an internal conflict going on in the country at that time.

AFAD also welcomed delegates Mr. Bikram Tuladhar from Nepal and Ms. Nitaya Wangpaiboon from Thailand representing the organizations of Advocacy Forum and Working Group for Justice and Peace respectively. They have been invited in light of AFAD's expansion of membership to Nepal and other organizations in Thailand aside from its current member group, Relative's Committee.

The Secretariat gave them a brief introduction of the Federation including the highlights of the log frame; its Constitution; By-laws; and their job descriptions. To help everyone get to know each other and establish good camaraderie among all staff members, everyone took part in the team building session.



Secretary-General Mary Aileen Bacalso gives the country staff members and other delegates a brief introduction about the Federation.

4.2 Internship in South America (Argentina and Chile)



Campaign Officer Mia (second to the left) with some staff of the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo*.

For six-weeks, the AFAD Campaign Officer underwent an internship program with the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* in Argentina and with the *Agrupación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos* in Chile. Her goal was to learn from the experience of Latin America and then use her learning in helping build or strengthen the campaign and pursuit for truth, justice, redress and recuperation of the

historical memory of the disappeared in Asia. She stayed in Buenos Aires for five

weeks then spent the last week of her program in Santiago.

Her work there entailed meeting with various organizations working on the different aspects (truth, justice, memory) of the struggle against disappearances, talking with families of the disappeared, researching materials for the AFAD resource center, and participating in rallies or marches. She also visited or toured memorials and even secret detention/torture centers used during the dictatorships. Every week, she submitted reports detailing her activities within the program's duration.

4.3 Lobby Training

Early this year, the UN Commission on Human Rights was abolished. In its place, the UN created the Human Rights Council. This caused shifts in the operation and correspondence in the multilateral system governing the member-states of the UN compelling AFAD to assess and re-strategize its lobby and campaign activities to create a stronger impact and garner more support for the adoption and ratification of the Convention by the UN. Thus, from May 6 to 8, the AFAD Secretariat, Council members, and representatives from FEDEFAM, Linking Solidarity and We Remember-Belarus underwent a lobby training activity facilitated by Geneva-based lawyer Cecilia Jimenez at the Development Academy of the Philippines in Tagaytay. For three days, they engaged in active discussions and workshops allowing many members especially the new ones, to improve and acquire new lobbying skills and more knowledge regarding the developing situations in the international arena. They set goals, objectives and planned activities in preparation for the first session of the HRC. And all these paid off come the June 19 when the HRC finally adopted the Convention and passed it on to the UN General Assembly, whose Third Committee approved it unanimously on November 13. The General Assembly finally adopted it on December 20, 2006.

4.4 Training on the use of UN Mechanisms

On August 31, Ms. Gabriela Citroni, human rights law expert and member of the Italian delegation of the then UN Inter-Sessional Open-ended Working Group to Elaborate a Draft Legally-Binding Normative Instrument for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances give the AFAD secretariat a "Training on International Mechanisms vis-à-vis Enforced Disappearances in Asia." The workshop was held at Island Cove Resort, Cavite. Given that Asia lacks a regional human rights court, the UN system is (as of the moment) the only international forum to which the Asian countries can go to file their cases which their domestic courts did not want to work on or rejected. Thus, it has become important for the AFAD members to know how they can maximize the existing UN mechanisms



Human Rights Law expert Gabriela Citroni discusses the existing UN mechanisms.



Training participants listen attentively.

to bring truth and justice not only to the many cases of disappearance in Asia but also threats to the lives of families of the disappeared. Ms. Citroni highlighted two important points as to why it is crucial to use these mechanisms: "1) because sometimes they are effective; and 2) because international awareness on what is going on in Asia is important."

For one day, Ms. Citroni discussed that organizations can send case reports of disappearances, urgent appeals, prompt intervention for reprisals, and general allegations to the UNWGEID. She also

guided the participants through filling out forms and writing letters/allegations to help them become more familiar in using these existing tools.

Moreover, she informed them of the possible international bodies which can respond to their specific needs. The immediate and most important of these bodies that must be informed is the UNWGEID. But cases may also be forwarded to the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Human Rights Defenders and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of expression and opinion.

The Human Rights Committee, she said, can also be used. However, since only Sri Lanka, Nepal and the Philippines are the only Asian countries which ratified the ICCPR and its Additional Protocol, only these three countries can submit cases of enforced disappearance to the Committee.

4.5 Research Training and Planning

From September 4-6, the last three days of the week-long series of activities held in Island Cove, the participants underwent a Researchers' Training through the facilitation of Ms. Agnes Rio and Ms. Violeta de Guzman.

This training was organized in preparation for the research project that AFAD planned to conduct in order to come up with a comprehensive study on the situation of disappearances in Asia in the general socio-political and economic context. Considering that the Federation is regional in scope, it has the tendency to make sweeping generalizations on the situation of the families of the disappeared. Through this study, AFAD hopes to understand better the families' real situation and consequently be able to responsive more efficiently to their needs.



AFAD Country Staff Assif informs the group of the situation in Kashmir.

The training started with a leveling off among the participants in terms of their knowledge and skills in conducting researches. The facilitators guided the group through the various technical terms, i.e. research design, research problem/question, objectives, methodology, etc.; and different stages in the process of doing the research, i.e. data gathering, writing the report, etc.

The participation of the country staff members from Indonesia and Kashmir, as well as the presence of other representatives from Thailand and Nepal were crucial since they are the principal persons tasked to implement the research in their respective countries in coordination with the AFAD Secretariat and the Regional Research Coordinators (who are the facilitators themselves).

At the end of the training, the country representatives were able to come up with a draft research design and also a draft questionnaire for the survey of the families, their local organizations and their governments. Assignments for other Asian countries which are not yet members of AFAD have also been noted. Then the group agreed on the schedule of deadlines to submit their organizational profiles, country reports and final research design.

4.6 Strategic Planning

From December 12 to 15, the Federation held its Strategic Planning in Kathmandu, Nepal. During these days the AFAD Council members, the Secretariat and representatives from host organization, Advocacy Forum, revisited AFAD's vision, mission and goals and assessed its performance over the last three years in order to facilitate a better process of planning for the next six years. Invited as facilitators/resource speakers were consultants Mr. Delfin Borrero and Ms. Marlea Muñez. The group started the session by leveling off each and everyone's expectations and understanding of terms or concepts regularly exchanged among the members of the Federation and its network of international and local organizations. The group then reviewed and discussed its principles, constitution, objectives and program of action and later established a more concrete identity of being a Federation of human rights organization directly working on the issue of involuntary disappearances in Asia in its pursuit of a world with no more disappearances.



Facilitator Marlea goes through the group's metacards stating the members' reasons for joining AFAD.

The concrete output of the strategic planning is the revised mission, vision and goals of the Federation.

5. Relationship with Partners



With Linking Solidarity partners in New York.

AFAD sustains its relationship with its partners through regular reporting and writing of project proposals to possible new partners. If there were opportunities for personal visits in their respective offices, the AFAD Secretary General visited them, e.g. HIVOS – The Netherlands and the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture in Switzerland.

It is important to note that reports to partners, especially those which are funding direct assistance projects, are dependent on the reports of the AFAD member-organizations, e.g.

rehabilitation projects and scholarship program. For AFAD-supported national lobbying activities, narrative and financial reports are necessary as well in order to substantiate the regional report and justify expenses.

6. Financial Reports and External Auditing

An external audit was conducted on the first quarter of the year on AFAD's finances for 2005. The said report, however, was delayed and submitted only at the end of April due to the limitations of the person in charge of AFAD's finances and other factors.

As required by the *Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED)*, at the middle of the year, an external audit of its funds was also conducted, the result of which was appreciated by *EED*.

Other partners require non-audited financial reports, which were accomplished. They were still given the comprehensive audited financial reports for the purpose of beefing up AFAD's credibility.

COMPONENTS OF WORK

⊕ Lobbying

1. International Level

1.1 AFAD's Participation in the United Nations Human Rights Council

In June 2006, AFAD participated in the historic session of the United Nations Human Rights Council through the presence and active participation of three of its Council members from the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

Forms of participation include the following:

- **Oral intervention during the official session**

The AFAD Secretary-General made an oral intervention in the name of various Asian NGOs on the occasion of the historic first session of the United Nations Human Rights Council. AFAD is certain that such an intervention, which was listened to by many governments and officially documented by the United Nations, is important both in the projection of the phenomenon of enforced disappearances in Asia and as an input to governments which helped them in their decision to unanimously adopt the United Nations Draft Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

- **Parallel event**

These were NGO events conducted parallel with the official first session of the United Nations Human Rights Council. AFAD and other NGOs concerned with the issue of enforced disappearances, conducted coordinated efforts with the common objective of lobbying for the adoption of the Convention.

➤ **Parallel event within the *Palais des Nations*, Geneva, Switzerland**

A Parallel Activity, jointly conducted by AFAD, *FEDEFAM*, We Remember-Balarus and International Commission of Jurists, Linking Solidarity was conducted while the official session was on-going in June 2006. The presentations of the Panel of Speakers focused on the Draft Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.



BBC interview in Geneva during the first HRC session.

Panel of speakers were composed of Latin American Ambassadors and *FEDEFAM* representative Marta Vasquez and AFAD Secretary-General Mary Aileen D. Bacalso.

The said parallel activity was very well appreciated and in fact, elicited very positive reactions from the audience, both from the government and NGO side.

➤ **Parallel event in the Garden of the Disappeared in Geneva**

There is a Garden of the Disappeared in Geneva, Switzerland. During the First Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, a parallel event was conducted. The activity, which was a Tribute to the Disappeared, was graced by no less than His Excellency French Ambassador Bernard Kessedjian. Both AFAD and *FEDEFAM* shared the phenomena of enforced disappearances and the need for an international convention on the protection of all persons from enforced or involuntary disappearances. There was also a tree-planting ceremony, as the garden has trees in honor of the disappeared from different continents.

▪ **Actual lobbying with governments**

AFAD, together with the rest of the international movement against involuntary disappearances, made a joint lobbying with governments during the first session of the United Nations Human Rights Council. In as far as AFAD is concerned, it lobbied with some Asian governments, e.g. Indonesia, Philippines, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. AFAD, in cooperation with other organizations, also spoke with other governments from other continents.

▪ **Letter Barrage and Signature Campaign**

Prior to the abolition of the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights, AFAD conducted a letter barrage to the different member-states of the United Nations, through their Permanent Missions in Geneva. The purpose of the letter barrage was to lobby for the inclusion in the agenda of the former UN Commission on Human Rights the draft international treaty against disappearances. The campaign was done in coordination with other organizations such as the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), International

Commission of Jurists, Amnesty International, Linking Solidarity and organizations of families of the disappeared from different countries.

The decision, however, of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights before its abolition was to bequeath the agenda of the Draft on the Convention on the Protection of All Persons From Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to the then to be established United Nations Human Rights Council. But it is important to note that indeed, the Convention on Disappearances was considered as one of the major agenda of the first session of the newly-established United Nations Human Rights Council.

AFAD also joined the international signature campaign initiated and coordinated by Linking Solidarity. It was able to collect hundreds of signatures from personalities from different Asian countries.

- **Lobbying in the United Nations General Assembly in New York**



Strategizing during the assembly in New York.

In October 2006, during the on-going session of the United Nations General Assembly, AFAD cooperated with *FEDEFAM*, We Remember-Belarus, the Center for Victims of Trauma in South Africa and Linking Solidarity in their last ditch efforts to continue lobbying, at a very late stage, for the final adoption of the Convention.

Carrying the voice of the families of the disappeared, the international network against enforced disappearances visited the Permanent Missions to the United

Nations in New York of the following countries: Sri Lanka, Poland, Uruguay, Sweden, The Netherlands and the Philippines. All the Permanent Missions visited had one common response: YES to the Convention. Optimistic of the future instrument's unanimous adoption by the United Nations General Assembly, these Missions revealed that there was not much to worry about.

On November 13, 2006, the Third Committee (Social, Cultural and Humanitarian) of the United Nations (UN), on the occasion of the 61st General Assembly held in New York, adopted by consensus the draft resolution on the International Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

Finally, on December 20, 2006, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the Draft Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and opened it for signatures, the ceremony of which is scheduled on February 6, 2007.

- **Lobbying for the inclusion of AFAD's application for Consultative Status with the UN ECOSOC**

After the participation of AFAD in the 18th FEDEFAM Congress held in Bogota, Colombia in July 2006, the AFAD Secretary-General visited the office of the United Nations NGO Committee in New York. She was informed that the application, which was already resent in December 2004, was lost. She had to resend the application additional documents were attached to the application.

To note, the office of the not very efficient in informing NGO applicants applications. In the next November during the Convention, the resent followed up, because acknowledgement of written requests for informed that no said When the AFAD requested them to retrieve application was found.



AFAD distributes copies of "The Voice" calling for the approval of the Convention.

UN NGO Committee was systematizing its files and of the status of their visit to New York in lobbying for the application was again there was no receipt despite several such. Again, AFAD was application was resent. Secretary-General computer, the said resent

After which, there was a discussion on the files resent, e.g. the difficulty of AFAD, with the presence of Kashmir and China, to have the application approved. The person in charge told AFAD that the application was going to be deferred due to the most likely protests of both Indian and Chinese governments. Moreover, with the abolition of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, AFAD was advised to make further revisions. Due to time constraint, the said revisions will have to be done after the said Congress so that new documents to be approved by the Congress can also be submitted.

2. National Level

2.1 Series of Fora on the Convention in Manila, Philippines

- **"Convention Now! Respect the Right Not to be Disappeared! (UP Balay Kalinaw)**

In 22 September 2005, the UN Inter-sessional Open Ended Working Group for a Draft Legally-binding Normative Instrument for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances approved the text of the International Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances. To bring this news and other updates to the governments, country diplomats, human rights organizations, the media, the church people and the general public, AFAD held a public briefing on 11 May 2006 at the UP Balay Kalinaw. It emphasized the theme: "Convention Now! Respect the Right Not to be Disappeared!" The event was graced by members of the Council. Delegates from other regions served as the event's panel of speakers, namely, Sra. Maria

Adela of FEDEFAM, Ms. Cecilia Jimenez, Ms. Irina Krasovskaya of We Remember-Belarus and Suciwati, wife of Munir. Moreover, representatives from the Philippine government offices, foreign embassies, media, church, and most especially families of the disappeared attended the forum. The Filipino children of the disappeared under the group called *Samahan ng mga Anak ng mga Desaparecido* or SAD presented a moving dance interpretation of the families struggle for truth, justice and recuperation of their disappeared loved ones' memory. Guest performer, Dawn Bande, gave a rendition of AFAD's theme song for the disappeared entitled, *Desaparecidos*.

▪ **"United Nations' Adoption of the Convention Against Disappearances – An Imperative!" (Rockwell Center)**

Following the approval of the Convention by the Human Rights Council in June, AFAD intensified its campaign for the approval and adoption of the instrument by the UN General Assembly. To gain more support from the governments (through their country representatives in Manila), AFAD invited them once more last August 30 (International Day of the Disappeared) to another public briefing on the theme, "United Nations' Adoption of the Convention Against Disappearances – An Imperative!" at the Ateneo Professional Schools, Rockwell Center. This was organized together with the Ateneo Human Rights Center (AHRC) and supported by the French Embassy.



Italian delegate Gabriella Citroni briefs the diplomats, law students, NGOs, and the media about the issue of disappearances.

AFAD gathered a strong panel of international and local experts as speakers: Ms. Gabriela Citroni, member of the Italian delegation of the then United Nations Inter-sessional Open-ended Working Group to Elaborate a Draft Legally-Binding Normative Instrument for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; Mr. Bernard Regnaud Fabre, Charge d'Affairs of the French Embassy; and from the Philippines, Atty. Carlos Medina, AHRC Executive Director; and Ms. Karen Gomez-Dumpit, Director for Government Linkages from the Commission on Human Rights.



AFAD Secretariat and friends pose in front of the *Desaparecidos* exhibit at Rockwell Center.

More than just factual information about the Convention and the current reality concerning disappearances, the speakers provided good insights which stirred critical thinking among the audience which was mainly composed of law students from the Ateneo Professional Schools. Present also were members of the international



community such as representatives of the Embassy of Mexico, Embassy of Canada, Embassy of the Czech Republic, Embassy of Finland, Embassy of Sweden, Embassy of New Zealand, Embassy of Spain, Embassy of Sri Lanka, Embassy of Chile, Embassy of Russia, the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Swiss Embassy, French Embassy, Italian Embassy, the European Commission and the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs.

Members from the press came and covered the event. The Philippine Star newspaper published on September 3 an article about the forum entitled, "France to RP: Sign UN Convention vs. Enforced Disappearances."

- **Convention Forum organized in cooperation with the Commission on Human Rights and FIND (Balay Kalinaw)**

In cooperation with the Philippine Commission on Human Rights and FIND, AFAD co-organized a third forum on the Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances. The purpose of the Forum was to ensure a positive vote of the Philippine Government during the United Nations Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced or



CHR Commissioner Purificacion Quisumbing addresses the audience composed of representatives from the police, military, NGOs and the CHR.

Involuntary Disappearances. It was participated in by representatives of government agencies, including the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Philippine National Police, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine Navy. The concern of almost all of these groups was their perceived need to include cases perpetrated by non-state entities in the definition of enforced disappearances.

2.2 Embassy hopping (different foreign embassies in Manila)

The AFAD Secretariat conducted an embassy hopping to complement efforts in the different countries to lobby for governments' support for the Convention Against Disappearances. Visited are the following embassies: The United States of America, Canada, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Finland, The Netherlands, France, Australia, Italy. The meetings centered on the phenomena of enforced disappearances in Asia, the work of AFAD and the imperative of a Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

- **Lobbying in Indonesia**

KontraS and *IKOHI* conducted lobbying activities in the national level. They visited different foreign embassies in Jakarta and national government agencies. The efforts certainly paid off because the Indonesian government supported the Convention Against Disappearances both in the first session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva and the Third Committee of the UN in New York.

▪ Lobbying in Sri Lanka

The Organization of Parents of Disappeared Persons (OPFMD), in cooperation with Asia Foundation other NGOs based in Colombo conducted series of lobbying for the Convention Against Disappearances. When the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka in New York was visited by AFAD and the rest of the international movement against disappearances in October, it also signified its intention to support the Convention, however, it said that it did not have the instruction to immediately sign and ratify it.

The activities of AFAD during the year, not to mention all the detailed activities done by its member-organizations for the purpose of lobbying, focused both on international lobbying at the level of the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly as well as national lobbying. The Convention's final adoption by the General Assembly at the end of the year proved that such efforts were effective.

✦ International Campaign and Public Information

The following activities are limited to the activities of the Secretariat in terms of campaign for truth, justice, redress and the recuperation of the historical memory of the disappeared. Most of the activities below focused on information dissemination. The main substance of this particular component of work is being done by its AFAD member-organizations, however, due to lack of information from the member-organizations, the report in this regard is limited only to the secretariat activities, which were done for the purpose of supporting the more substantial campaign work in the national level.

1. Statements on different issues and occasions



A copy of the IWD statement.

During important occasions in the Federation's calendar such as the International Week of the Disappeared and the International Day of the Disappeared, or even on significant news events, i.e. the struggle against the King in Nepal last April, AFAD came out with statements to express solidarity with its member-organization and also to make known to the public AFAD's stand on occurring events and controversial issues.

2. Campaign Materials

In anticipation of the first session of the new Human Rights Council in June that was expected to deliberate the approval of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, AFAD geared up its campaign for the Convention's successful approval in the United Nations. It designed and printed Convention primers, folders, posters, stickers, bookmarks, pins which all called out for "Convention Now! Respect the Right Not to be Disappeared!" These were distributed to different international and local organizations. It became AFAD's official slogan of 2006.

More, the AFAD theme song, "*Desaparecidos*," was reproduced as well. Some copies were sold during the public forum held in Rockwell and the others were distributed along with the printed campaign materials in Argentina and Chile when Campaign Officer, Mia Aureus, went there for her six-week internship program last September-October.

Country representatives during the HRC session check out during the break AFAD's campaign materials.



3. Publications

Due to the many trainings and activities of the Federation this year, AFAD's official publication, *The Voice*, only came out only once in November. It focused on the Convention as a theme. It featured the lobbying and campaign activities for the Convention and the rehabilitation sessions conducted within the year. Included as well are articles on the AFAD membership expansion to Nepal, the continued pursuit for justice in Sri Lanka, the lobby for the anti-disappearance bill in the Philippines, an update on the Munir trial case, etc. AFAD also reprinted statements from *FEDEFAM*, and the GRP and NDFP.

This issue was released just in time for the AFAD Third Congress and Strategic Planning scheduled in December in Kathmandu. It was distributed to the Council Members and the other international delegates who had been invited to participate.

4. Translation to Spanish of AFAD's Video, "Healing Wounds, Mending Scars"

To help facilitate a better and deeper level of awareness about Asia's struggle against disappearances among its Latin American counterpart and other Spanish-speaking countries, AFAD had its documentary video, "Healing Wounds, Mending Scars," translated and dubbed in Spanish.

It was soon presented in July before the members of *FEDEFAM* during their 18th Annual Congress in Colombia. This target audience received the video well as it allowed them to transcend geographical limits and see and feel the same pain that the Asian victims and families of the disappeared suffer. After the video presentation, they requested for copies of the video. AFAD, then, reproduced the video for distribution to the Spanish-speaking members of its network organizations.

5. Research work on the phenomena of enforced disappearances in Asia

As a concrete output of the Research training held in Cavite, Philippines, AFAD has been able to undergo an on-going research on the phenomena of enforced disappearances in Asia. Research designs were formulated by country staff members and contractual writers. Furthermore, initial national situations have been

written, the results of which served as basis for the initial writing of a regional situation on the phenomena of enforced disappearances in Asia.

6. Establishment and operationalization of the AFAD Resource Center in honor of Munir and Aasia Jeelani

Through the moral and material support of The Royal Netherlands Embassy, AFAD was able to launch its Resource Center in honor of Munir and Aasia Jeelani. Held on May 11, 2006 in Manila, Philippines, the launching was graced by all members of AFAD; representatives of *FEDEFAM*, Non-Violence International and local NGOs. Significant to note was the presence of Ms. Suciwati, the widow of Munir and Mr. Mir Hazifullah of the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons in Kashmir. Royal Netherlands Embassy and the Germany Embassy representatives attended the launching.

The Resource Center started its acquisition of materials (pieces of equipment, books and audio-visuals) in January of this year. Since then, it has built a good collection of materials from various countries. These have all been organized and arranged based on the Dewey Decimal System.



Munir and Aasia's replica displayed at the AFAD Resource Center.

Moreover, it has recently begun its setting up of a comprehensive database of disappearance cases in Asia. This aspect of the Resource Center has been integrated with the research project being conducted on the situation of disappearances in Asian countries. AFAD aims to create a centralized source of information on disappearances in the region.

Considering that this library is open for public access, the AFAD Secretariat conducted a number of activities to promote the Resource Center.

6.1 School/University Hopping (Laguna and Baguio)

In celebration of the International Week of the Disappeared, the AFAD Secretariat discussed and presented last May 24, before the faculty members of the Laguna Bel-Aire School the issue of enforced disappearance in the Philippines and in other Asian countries. They first presented the AFAD video, "Healing Wounds, Mending Scars." This documentary of the political history and the state of disappearances in the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Kashmir, China and Pakistan serves as AFAD's visual medium to convey the urgent message to stop disappearances. The Federation aims to gradually create more awareness (and hopefully, vigilance) among members of the society regarding this important issue threatening human rights. After the video, the Secretariat members also showed the PowerPoint presentation introducing the Resource Center, which has already been opened for public use since its launching

on May 12, 2006. clarifications, and entertained later forum.

This activity was July 24-26 to two college school in the (University of University and The AFAD campaign teamed up to "university campaign activity." members of the university resource



The AFAD Secretariat with the Laguna Bel-air School Principal Mercedes Contreras-Danenberg (second to left).

very interested in the topic and requested the AFAD Secretariat to arrange another schedule to present the issue to a bigger audience. AFAD hopes to be able to schedule another education campaign activity in these universities as well as in other universities next year and further build on the public's knowledge and awareness on this most crucial form of human rights violation.

Questions, comments were during the open

later echoed last universities and one province of Baguio Baguio, St. Louis Eastern College). officer and librarian conduct this hopping/education The students, faculty and the center staff became

6.2 Meeting at the Embassy of Indonesia in Manila and Silent Prayer for Munir during his second death anniversary on September 7, 2006

On the occasion of the 2nd death anniversary of Munir, AFAD, whose member-organizations were represented by their country staff members, had a meeting with the Deputy Head of Mission of the Indonesian embassy. The meeting aimed to press for justice for Munir, his family and the Indonesian human rights community; to express concern over the state of human rights in Indonesia being a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council and to lobby for the Convention Against Disappearances. While the meeting was going on, representatives of AFAD member-organizations, who brought with them flowers and pictures of Munir, held a silent prayer at the gate of the embassy.

✦ International Solidarity



Nations united.

AFAD's work in relation international solidarity focused more on consolidation of its member-organizations through direct assistance to the families of the disappeared. Expansion, although considered as important, played a secondary concern in terms of actual output, considering that only two new member-organizations have been approved.

Below are the activities in relation to international solidarity:

1. Rehabilitation activities

As follow-up to the First Sharing of Experiences of Families of the Disappeared, national rehabilitation activities have been conducted in order to reach out to families of the disappeared in the different countries. These efforts aimed to complement whatever rehabilitation efforts the member-organizations are conducting in the country level.

Below are the activities conducted for the national rehabilitation activities, entitled: "Healing Wounds, Mending Scars."

1.1 Organizations of Parents and Family Members of the Disappeared (Sri Lanka)

Forty family members of the disappeared participated in the rehabilitation activity facilitated in by two resource persons from the Philippines who were also the facilitators of the First Sharing of Experiences of Asian Families of the Disappeared in Jakarta, Indonesia. The families of the victims appreciated their being able to share their common pains to their co-families of the disappeared and expressed the need to have the same experience shared with other victims.

1.2 Truth and Justice Commission (Pakistan)

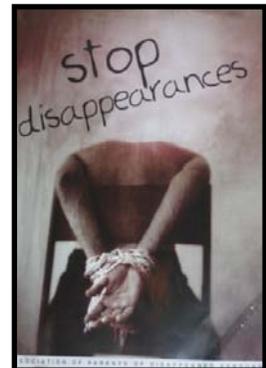


Families in Pakistan remember their disappeared loved ones through art.

Despite difficulties due to the natural disasters that hit the country affecting a number of family members of the disappeared, the rehabilitation session was realized in October 2006 with the help of AFAD Secretariat member, Jennifer Pacursa. Jennifer was able to attend previous rehabilitation sessions, the process of which she followed when the psychologist from the Philippines, Cecilia Lioanag, who was supposed to facilitate the session, failed to travel to Pakistan due to visa problem. About 20 family members of the disappeared from different areas of Pakistan, who were hit by the disaster, participated.

1.3 APDP (Kashmir)

Despite the security problems faced by the organization of families of the disappeared, the rehabilitation session was finally realized through the help of the *Medicins Sans Frontiers* (Doctors without Borders) and the Department of Psychiatry in Kashmir. The AFAD Secretary-General, Mary Aileen D. Bacalso gave an introduction on the background of the rehabilitation project and the need for the project to be implemented by the families of the victims with the direction to empower them both as individuals and as organizations. Jennifer Pacursa assisted in the documentation of the said session.



APDP campaign poster against disappearances.

The three-day activity was done through individual sharing to the whole group of about 25 family members of the disappeared and one-on-one sharing of the effects of the disappearance by each of the participant present.



Kashmiri families demand: Stop disappearances!

Both the group sharing and individual sessions, facilitated by about 12 professionals, indeed gave AFAD and the APDP a better knowledge of the problems and needs of these families. APDP realized that the families of the disappeared shared more profound feelings and experiences to The Doctors without Borders which indeed, need a more sustained and systematic intervention in the future.

1.4 Working Group on Justice for Peace (Southern Thailand)

The Working Group on Justice for Peace, which is applying for membership in AFAD, is conducting a rehabilitation session for about 30 family members of the disappeared in Southern Thailand on the second week of December – simultaneous with the rehabilitation activity conducted in Nepal. Ms. Cecilia Lionag, a psychologist in the Philippines, who did several rehabilitation activities for the members of FIND, in cooperation with local psychologists, is facilitating the session.

1.5 Advocacy Forum (Nepal)

AFAD sponsored a national rehabilitation session in Kathmandu a few days before AFAD held its strategic planning and this Third Congress. Facilitated by a local psychologist in cooperation with resource persons from the Philippines, the session was aimed to make an initial program of rehabilitation for the families of the victims. The forum was appreciated by majority of the families of the disappeared. At any rate, the activity was successful despite some problems.

The above-mentioned mentioned activities had some follow-up activities in countries which were ready for the next level of rehabilitation session. The third of the series of levels of rehabilitation program is entitled *"From Victims to Healers."*

Organizations which were ready for such level of activity chose from among those who participated in the national rehabilitation sessions, "Healing Wounds, Mending Scars" potential healers of their co-victims. Thus, the third level of rehabilitation program conducted by AFAD was implemented by the following:



A young Nepali girl paints her sadness and grief on a white cloth.

- ***IKOHI* – Indonesia**

Towards the end of November, *IKOHI* conducted a rehabilitation program entitled, from “Victims to Healers.” Facilitated by local psychologists in cooperation with a local group in Indonesia, the activity was participated in by 15 family members of the disappeared. The result of which will be used for further activities with co-victims in 2007.

- **Organization of Parents and Family Members of the Disappeared – Sri Lanka**

From the forty family-members of the disappeared who attended the national rehabilitation session, 15 family members of the disappeared were chosen to participate in the program, “From Victims to Healers.” Initial plan as to how their skills could be applied in the national level were formulated as preparation for 2007.

2. Scholarships

2.1 Scholarships for the children of the disappeared in Sri Lanka

Within the period, funding was released for the scholarship of forty children of the disappeared in Sri Lanka. It is part of the continuing program for these children, whose parents (mostly their fathers), were victimized by enforced disappearances, thus, the families being economically dislocated have difficulty in responding to the educational needs of their children.

2.2 Scholarship for the children of the disappeared in Kashmir

Sixty children of the disappeared benefited from the scholarship fund from the *Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst* – Germany. All of them were beneficiaries of previous scholarship program also funded by *EED*.

2.3 Scholarship for the children of the disappeared in Indonesia

Forty children of the disappeared have benefited from the scholarship fund from the OAK Foundation. The parents of these children are indeed very grateful to AFAD and its partner for this project and hope that it be sustained in the next years to come.

2.4 Scholarship for the children of the disappeared in Southern Thailand

Twenty-nine children of the disappeared have benefited from the scholarship fund from the *Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst* – *EED*.

The above-mentioned efforts aimed at rehabilitating the families of the disappeared and helping towards the consolidation of AFAD member-organizations in countries above-mentioned.

Lamentably, due to a profound conflict with the Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance (FIND), AFAD’s founder, FIND, decided to resign from the Federation,

but mentioned that it would still be willing to work with the Federation on issues of common concern. AFAD, with regret, had to accept the resignation of FIND. While exerting all efforts in convincing FIND not to resign, AFAD was not in the position to prevent FIND from resigning from the Federation. However, AFAD could not also compromise with the principle of international solidarity, which is the essence of its existence and which, it believes, FIND violated. AFAD recognizes that the resignation of FIND is a great loss to the Federation while it believes that it can still continue to strengthen itself without negating the issue of enforced disappearances in the Philippines, especially so that its secretariat is based in the country.

✦ **Expansion efforts**

To respond to the need to reach out to other families of the disappeared, AFAD agreed to recruit more member-organizations within the year, thus, through active recruitment; it was able to receive applications for membership from the following organizations:

1. Advocacy Forum (Nepal)



On July 24, 2006, Advocacy Forum expressed intention to be part of AFAD. Mugiyanto, AFAD Council member, visited the organization within the year, after which, the letter signifying its intention to apply for membership was sent to AFAD. The said application was approved by the AFAD Congress last December.

Mothers look for the pictures of their disappeared loved ones.

2. War Crimes Fact Finding Commission (Bangladesh)

Dr. Hassan, the head of this organization, expressed its intention to be part of AFAD. The AFAD Secretary-General has been in regular contact with Dr. Hassan, who wanted to attend the activities in the Philippines in August 2006, but due to health reasons, he was not able to join. He confirmed his participation in the Third Congress of AFAD but for whatever reason, he was not able to do so. The said application was deferred and would be discussed again in the meeting of the new AFAD Council most probably in March 2006.

3. Working Group on Justice for Peace (Southern Thailand)

On the last week of November 2006, AFAD received an application for membership from this group in Southern Thailand headed by Mrs. Angkana Neelaphajit, the wife of missing lawyer, Somchai Neelaphajit. The group was personally visited by the AFAD Secretary-General also in November and is now implementing AFAD's rehabilitation and scholarship programs. The application would be discussed by the new AFAD Council in its next meeting most probably in March 2006, as AFAD believed it needed more time to know the organization better.

4. Claimants 1081 (Philippines)

Concerned of the fact that FIND resigned from AFAD and that the latter may not anymore be able to give the necessary services to the families of the disappeared and to project the issue of enforced disappearances in the regional and international level, officers of Claimants 1081 requested for a meeting with the AFAD Secretary-General to explore the possibility of its membership in AFAD. A meeting was held on the first week of September, after which, its Chairperson, Member of House of Representatives and AFAD supporter Loretta Anne Rosales expressed Claimants 1081's intention to be a member of AFAD.

Claimants 1081 is a group of 10,000 victims of human rights violations during the Marcos regime who won a class suit against former Philippine President, Ferdinand Marcos in the Federal Court of Hawaii. Some of its members are also members of FIND who are families of those who disappeared during the Marcos regime. Claimants 1081, however, mentioned that they are expanding its mandate to serve victims of human rights violations beyond the Marcos regime.

The application of Claimants 1081 was approved by the AFAD Congress.

KontraS and *IKOHI* mentioned of exploring the possibility to recruit an AFAD member in East Timor. No development has been reported, so far. This attempt to reach out to an organization of families of the disappeared in East Timor is a long-time plan of AFAD way back in 1999 when it was still in its stage of infancy.

✚ Cooperation with other continents

An integral part of AFAD's international solidarity work is its cooperation with similar federation/s and/or formations in other continents.

AFAD cooperates with *FEDEFAM* of Latin America, *CSVN*- Africa, *We Remember-Belarus* and *Linking Solidarity-The Netherlands* in the common struggle for truth, justice, redress and the recuperation of the historical memory of the disappeared.

Below were the efforts conducted in this regard:

1. Participation in the 18th *FEDEFAM* Congress (Bogota, Colombia)



The AFAD Secretary-General participated in the 18th Congress of *FEDEFAM* and presented, through the Spanish version of its video production, "Healing Wounds, Mending Scars."

In Solidarity with *FEDEFAM* against disappearances and impunity!

2. Joint activities with *FEDEFAM*, *We Remember-Belarus*, with *CSVN* group and *Linking Solidarity*

In the joint effort to lobby for the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, AFAD came up

with joint activities with the said organizations both in Geneva and in New York. They were also invited to attend the AFAD Congress, however, for one reason or another, only CSVR group was able to attend;

3. Internship in Latin America

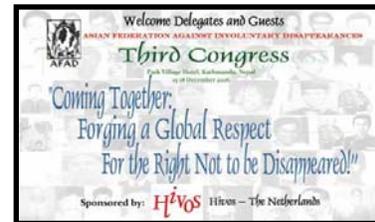
The internship in Latin America already mentioned under capacity-building efforts which was part of AFAD's long-term endeavor to cooperate with *FEDEFAM* and learn from its experience in the struggle against impunity.

4. Inviting these organizations in some of AFAD's major activities

AFAD invited the said organizations to attend some of its major activities, e.g. Lobby training and the AFAD Congress in order to ensure continuing exchange of experiences both in terms of situations and organizational response to the situation. These efforts proved fruitful in maintaining and ensuring coordination to fortify the joint struggle against impunity.

4.1 AFAD Third Congress

The AFAD Secretariat, through the General Plan of Action (GPOA) and the 2006 Plan approved by the AFAD Congress, in consultation with individual Council members through emails and Yahoo Messenger conferences and through joint activities in Geneva and New York, initiated the preparation for the Third AFAD Congress to be held in Nepal on December 16-18, 2006.



Working at the Advocacy Forum Office. (above)



The Secretariat sorts out documents for the Congress kits. (left)

The original agreed venue of the Congress was Pakistan and then later, Sri Lanka. Due to problems caused by natural and human-made disasters in both countries, there was a suggestion, which was later agreed upon by majority of the Council members, to hold the activity in Nepal. The request from AFAD for Advocacy Forum to host the Congress in Nepal was readily accepted by the latter's Director, Mandira Sharma. After the said agreement, preparations were done by the AFAD Secretariat.

As compared to the previous Congress, the AFAD Secretariat could say that the Second Congress was better prepared because the whole AFAD Council discussed

about it several times during its meetings in the Philippines and in Geneva. Due to the time given for preparations, the proposed amendments to AFAD's statutes were given ahead of time, thus, facilitating the conduct of the whole session.

One major factor of the difficulty in preparing for the Congress were the other activities, e.g. lobbying for the Convention and the rehabilitation sessions which were done simultaneously with the Congress preparations. Most of the rehabilitation activities, which were supposed to be conducted on the first half of the year, were conducted during the last quarter of the year, making it very difficult for the whole Federation to focus on the Congress preparations.

Nevertheless, the overcome such successfully launched themed "Coming Global Respect for the Disappeared!" on Hotel De L'graced by the Nembang, Speaker of Representatives; Mr. Office of the



Ms. Mandira Sharma of Advocacy Forum hosts the Congress Opening Activity.

Secretariat managed to difficulties and the Third Congress Together: Forging a Right Not to be December 16 at the Annapurna. It was presence of Hon. Subash the House of David Johnson from the Commission on Human Rights; and Ms. Devi Sunwar, a mother of a disappeared girl. The event was attended by

members of other organizations, the media and Nepali families of the disappeared. The Congress main participants then went back to the Park Village Hotel conference hall to proceed with the session proper. Throughout the three-day event (December 16-18), the group listened to the Secretary-General's three-year and 2006 year-end narrative and financial reports, and the country reports from the Council members, from Mr. Alban Gift Mahopo for the South African report and from Ms. Christina Klissenbauer and Ms. Annette Fingscheidt, both members of the *FEDEFAM* Support Group in Germany, for the Latin America report. Membership applications were also deliberated. The Congress approved the application of Advocacy Forum (Nepal) and Claimants 1081 (Philippines). The group then spent much time discussing and amending the Federation's orientation, Constitution and By-laws. To end the Congress, the members conducted its election for new officers and Council members. Mr. Mugiyanto from IKOHI was elected as the new chairperson. Ms. Mary Aileen-Bacalso was re-elected as Secretary-General. Ms. Mandira Sharma won the treasurer's seat. The newly elected Council members are as follows: Mr. Parvez Imroz (APDP), Mr. Farooq Niazi (TJC), Mr. Shantha Pathirana (CPRLD), Ms. Sri Suparyati (KontraS), Ms. Agnes Gurning (IKOHI) and Ms. Kopila Adhikari (Advocacy Forum). The Congress ended with an oath-taking of the new set of Council members and officers and a dance-filled Solidarity Night.





AFAD's COMPLIANCE WITH THE AGREEMENT WITH HIVOS

1. **Expansion of Membership** - From the indicator of additional three new member-organizations in three new countries, AFAD, as above-mentioned, was able to approve two new members, e.g. the Advocacy Forum in Nepal and the Claimants 1081 in the Philippines. Two more applicant organizations are expected to join and membership approval is scheduled to be decided upon in March 2007. These are the organizations in Southern Thailand and Bangladesh. In its Strategic Plan for 2007-2012, AFAD has targetted at least, 15 additional member-organizations from new Asian countries in the next six years.

2. **Registration of data** – As a result of the Research training participated in by the AFAD Secretariat members and all country staff members, draft national situations and regional situation vis-à-vis disappearances and initial registration of cases are being done. It is planned to be finished within a year as a sequel to the book, "Healing Wounds, Mending Scars." The book, "Healing Wounds, Mending Scars" focused more on testimonies of the families of the disappeared. The next book is expected to be based on a more in-depth research which is on-going. The data-base is now being done by the AFAD librarian as part of the outputs of the resource center. When completed, these will be part contents of the book. The output will serve as bases of all the other components of work of AFAD.

3. **Improved Project Formulation and M and E System**
 - 3.1 **Capacity Building** – The target activities on Capacity-Building funded by PSO were all implemented and had, to a large measure, helped to improve the skills of the AFAD Council, the AFAD Secretariat and the newly-recruited country staff members in carrying out their tasks, e.g. planning, research, campaigning and lobbying work, etc..

 - 3.2 **Strategic Plan** – The AFAD Congress decided to approve a six-year Strategic Plan, the process of which was conducted by the AFAD Council and the AFAD Secretariat prior to the holding of the Third Congress.

 - 3.3 **Sex-disaggregated data used in reporting to HIVOS** – AFAD has not yet reached this level of reporting, but is trying to learn through future trainings and practice.

 - 3.4 **All staff members are integrated into the M and E system** – All staff members are already integrated into the Monitoring and Evaluation System. A process of performance evaluation were conducted during the year, e.g. self-evaluation; peer evaluation; supervisor's evaluation and collective evaluation with clear system of monitoring the recommendations agreed upon as a result of the process.

- 3.5 Improvement of the gender balance** – The newly elected Council of AFAD is now composed of five women and five men, but one more member has still to be determined by the newly approved member-organization, i.e. Claimants 1081-Philippines. The past Council only had two women. All members of the secretariat are women, while the country-staff members are composed of one woman and two men.

CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION

To note, this report has still to be substantiated by the report of AFAD's member-organizations in terms of responding to the continuing phenomena of enforced disappearances in the region. How did the whole Federation comprehensively respond, both as a Federation and as national organizations to the increasing cases of enforced disappearances both in

countries where its member-organizations are based and in countries where it does not have member-organizations but enforced disappearances are a continuing phenomenon? In what manner did it relate its issue and its corresponding response to the greater socio-economic and political situation of the Asian region, which is the context enforced disappearances? This is a serious matter which has to be answered by the AFAD Congress.

The Secretariat, Country Staff members and resource persons end the series of trainings with big smiles.

The year 2006 is indeed, a period of adjustment of the Federation. The expansion of its material and human resources and the corresponding increase in the work of the Federation posed a great challenge to the whole Federation, especially in terms of seriously implementing the recommendations pointed out as a result of its Participatory Evaluation conducted in July-August 2005.

In the aspect of Administration and Finance, one major development is the increase in the Federation's resources resulting in the corresponding increase in its work. To strike a correct balance between the increase in resources and in the Federation's work still remains to be implemented in order to comprehensively respond to the demands of the work both internally and externally. Much remains to be done in terms of professionalizing and systematizing the work of the Federation at all levels.

It is expected that AFAD's Strategic Planning will go a long way towards sharply identifying the problems and needs of the Federation and what it wants to achieve in the next years to come.



In the regional level, solidarity work in terms of consolidation focused on the rehabilitation and direct assistance projects of the Federation. How have these efforts been complemented by efforts of

The team succeeds in lobbying for the Convention in New York.

the member-organizations very much depends on the local resources available to respond to this need. Also, the Federation, after having undergone several efforts in terms of rehabilitation and direct assistance to the families of the disappeared, needs to thoroughly assess how effective the said projects had served the interests of the families of the disappeared vis-à-vis their further participation in the work for truth, justice, redress and the recuperation of the historical memory of the disappeared. One important point in this regard is the need to raise the level of conscientization and organization of the families of the disappeared in the national level. To note, the families of the disappeared, once rehabilitated, conscientized, organized and empowered, would serve as a formidable force of the whole Federation - its very source of internal strength.

Reaching out to organizations of families of the disappeared in other Asian countries has been done seriously within the year. For which reason, AFAD has received applications from four prospective member-organizations. The Third Congress, in its intention of expanding AFAD's services to families of the disappeared in other

countries who equally need the same support and solidarity, approved the membership application of two organizations, the Claimants 1081-Philippines and Advocacy Forum - Nepal. The two other applications will, once again, be discussed during AFAD's Council meeting on the first quarter of 2007.

In the international level, solidarity work has been sustained through joint efforts with similar formations in other continents. Such efforts, however, have not yet been very comprehensively done, perhaps because there is no existing international structure that ensures sustainability. It is possible that in the future, an international structure of organizations of families of the disappeared would eventually be developed when the situation would then necessitate a more sustained and stronger coordinated response to the global phenomena of enforced disappearances.

In the aspect of lobbying, AFAD claims its modest contribution to the unanimous adoption of the Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances by the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, the Third Committee of the United Nations and finally by the United Nations General Assembly in New York. Its consistent and active participation in all sessions of the then Inter-Sessional Open-ended Working Group to Draft a Legally-Binding Normative Instrument for the Protection of



Secretariat members sport their Convention Now! campaign t-shirts.

All Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and its lobbying efforts in the national and regional level had contributed to the said adoption. AFAD's existence has demystified what the Asian governments wanted to project, i.e. enforced disappearance is accordingly, solely a problem of Latin America.

AFAD, therefore, celebrates the victory with the rest of the international movement against involuntary disappearances.

Based on the present developments, AFAD's next level of lobbying would be the ratification of the Convention by Asian governments and the enactment of domestic laws criminalizing enforced disappearances. This is a new challenge for all AFAD member-organizations.

Campaign and Public Information work, as earlier mentioned, focused on the production of information dissemination materials to project the issue of enforced disappearances in Asia. Much remains to be done in terms of informing the general public about this issue which is more known in Latin America, but less known in Asia. The AFAD Resource Center in honor of Munir and Aasia Jeelani has great potentials in disseminating the phenomena of enforced or involuntary disappearances to a wider public.

The AFAD member-organizations have the challenge to concretize further the continuing search for truth, justice, redress and the recuperation of the historical memory of the disappeared.

For the search for the truth and for other purposes, a comprehensive data-base of cases of enforced disappearances in Asia is basic in doing the other aspects of AFAD's work, especially in the search for the truth, i.e. finding the disappeared alive or dead through different methods. AFAD is still in its very initial stage in this aspect of work. Moreover, an in-depth research of the phenomena of enforced disappearances both in Asia in general and in individual Asian countries is very basic to forge on with the other endeavors of AFAD. For which reason, the on-going research program initially done by AFAD is very important, indeed.

Breakthroughs in the search for justice and redress, concretely manifested in winning cases in courts, prosecuting perpetrators, giving indemnification to the victims and their families – these higher forms of victories remain to be garnered by AFAD and its member-organizations. *FEDEFAM's* experience in many Latin American countries is a source of inspiration and learning experience for AFAD. The most recent internship of one of the members of the Secretariat has to be fully maximized.

The work on the recuperation of the historical memory of the disappeared, while being done in forms of establishment of monuments in honor of the disappeared, has still to be developed. More concrete actions have still to be done in this regard in order for the Asian *desaparecidos* and *desaparecidas* to receive the recognition and respect that they deserve from the wider public.

On the whole, AFAD, hand in hand with the rest of the international movement against disappearances, is gradually moving forward in its uphill struggle for a continent, nay a world without *desaparecidos*. In the course of doing this, not only is its solidarity work among similar formations in other parts of the work important.



Embroidered AFAD logo – framed and displayed at the Secretariat office in Manila, Philippines.



Equally important is the support of civil society because enforced disappearance as an issue that belongs both to the families of the disappeared and to the greater society.